

Message Text

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21/46

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 EB-07 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04

ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 /085 W

----- 008119

R 250315Z NOV 76 ZEL

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6613

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 5344

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (HALF OF PARA 2 AND PARA 3
TRANSPPOSED WITH PARA 4 ON ORIG XMSN)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, JA, SN

SUBJECT: ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING, NOVEMBER 17, SINGAPORE

REF: (A) SINGAPORE 4462, (B) SINGAPORE 4725

1. SUMMARY. IN ADDITION TO ALLOCATING APPOINTMENTS WITHIN
THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT AND TO DECIDING UPON THE ORGANIZATION'S
INITIAL BUDGET (SEPARATE MESSAGE), THE ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE,
AT ITS NOVEMBER 17 MEETING IN SINGAPORE, DECIDED TO RESPOND
POSITIVELY TO JAPAN'S REQUEST FOR ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS.

HOWEVER, A CONSENSUS EMERGED THAT ASEAN WOULD NOT ATTEMPT
TO REVIVE MEDSEA, BUT WOULD RESPOND FAVORIBLY TO THE INITIATIVES

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OF OTHERS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON NOVEMBER 23, LEE CHIONG GIAM, MFA'S REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, BRIEFED EMBASSY OFFICERS ON NOVEMBER 17 ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING, CHAIRED BY THE SENIOR MINISTER FOR STATE (MFA) LEE KHOON CHOY. IN DECIDING TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO JAPAN'S FORMAL REQUEST FOR CONSULTATIONS, THE STANDING COMMITTEE POSED THREE CONDITIONS:

A. THAT GOJ-ASEAN CONSULTATIONS ON SYNTHETIC RUBBER CONTINUE;

B. THAT JAPANESE BILATERAL AID PROGRAMS WITH ASEAN MEMBERS NOT BE AFFECTED; AND

C. THAT CONSULTATIONS FORMAT EMPLOYED BE SIMILAR TO THAT IN USE FOR TALKS BETWEEN ASEAN ON ONE HAND AND EC, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ON THE OTHER. LEE SAID HE FELT FOREGOING CONDITIONS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO JAPANESE.

3. EMBOFF ASKED LEE WHETHER STANDING COMMITTEE HAD TOUCHED UPON REVIVAL OF MEDSEA OR SUBJECT OF CONSULTATIONS WITH U.S. ON FORMER, LEE SAID THAT MEDSEA HAD BEEN DISCUSSED INFORMALLY; WHILE THERE WAS AN INITIAL DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS, A CONSENSUS HAD EMERGED THAT ASEAN WOULD NOT TAKE THE LEAD IN REVIVING MEDSEA. HOWEVER, ASEAN WOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY IF ANOTHER COUNTRY TOOK THE INITIATIVE. IN ADDITION, MEDSEA SUBSIDIARY BODIES, LIKE THE STUDY GROUP ON ASIAN TAX ADMINISTRATION AND RESEARCH, WHICH MET IN SINGAPORE IN LATE OCTOBER, HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO INVITE ALL MEDSEA COUNTRIES (INCLUDING THE INDOCHINESE STATES) TO SCHEDULED MEETINGS. LEE AGAIN NOTED (REF B) THAT INDOCHINESE STATES HAD NOT RESPONDED TO INVITATIONS TO OCTOBER MEETING (OR, FOR THAT MATTER, TO INVITATIONS TO SIMILAR MEETINGS IN RECENT PAST). ONLY COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT TAX MEETING WERE INDONESIA, JAPAN, MALAYSIA, PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, SINGAPORE AND AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND (LATTER TWO ARE ASSOCIATE MEMBERS).

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4. ON ASEAN-U.S. CONSULTATIONS, LEE STATED THAT SINGAPORE REMAINED INTERESTED IN BEGINNING A DIALOGUE WITH THE U.S. MOREOVER, HE OPINED THAT THIS INTEREST WAS GENERALLY SHARED BY THE OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES. HE AGAIN OBSERVED THAT THE PHILIPPINES WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ASEAN COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE U.S. ALTHOUGH LEE QUICKLY ADDED THAT HE WOULD BE RELUCTANT, AS A GOS OFFICIAL, TO SUGGEST

THAT WE AVOID THIS CHANNEL, HE DID WISH TO NOTE THAT, IN HIS VIEW, THE APPROPRIATE CHANNEL FOR REQUESTING CONSULTATIONS IS THROUGH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE, IE., FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM. LEE POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS THE WAY THE JAPANESE HAD PROCEEDED: THEIR REQUEST HAD BEEN RECEIVED, CONSIDERED AND APPROVED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE. THE LATTER'S CONDITIONAL RESPONSE HAS, IN TURN, BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE JAPANESE BY MEANS OF AN AIDE MEMOIRE, INITIALED BY THE MFA'S PERMANENT SECRETARY. IT NOW REMAINS FOR INDONESIA -- THE COUNTRY DESIGNATED BY ASEAN TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH JAPAN - TO MAKE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING TIMING AND VENUE FOR THE GOJ-ASEAN CONSULTATIONS.

HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

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